



## AMUSEMENTS

There was the same crowding together of strong attractions in Omaha last week that there was in Lincoln, and as in this city De Wolf Hopper and Della Fox in "Panjandrum" topped off the week, so far as box office receipts were concerned. Some of the newspapers in Omaha criticised the taste of the people in filling the house when "Panjandrum" was presented, while Crane was allowed to appear to small audiences. The *Excelsior* intimated that "Panjandrum" is thin; that Della Fox is stout and that Hopper is inclined to be tiresome. Crane the same authority likens to Willard, and "Brother John" is given the highest meed of praise. In this city Toby Rex saw much to admire in Hopper's production, while the effusive dramatic critic of the *Journal* raised "Panjandrum" above "The Fencing Master" as an opera. "Brother John" was not enthusiastically received by the people who like a "show" better than a play. We agree with our Omaha contemporary that Hopper's opera is thin and that Della Fox is stout; but we can understand why the performance last Friday night gave such general satisfaction. There have been better operas than "Panjandrum" given in Lincoln; but in our opinion there has seldom been a play or an opera better put on here than this huge burlesque. It was acted with the same dash and spirit and close attention to detail that accompanied the production in the large cities. There was no cutting of scenes and incidents as was the case in "The Fencing Master," no slurring or hurrying. Hopper recited "Casey at the Bat" with just as much vim as he ever put into this piece, and he gave one more recitation not on the program. Della Fox is still Della Fox, though there are evidences of a tendency to embonpoint, and she furnished on the whole about as much amusement as Hopper. In the improvised base ball game she exhibited a delightful abandon, and she was altogether entertaining. The chorus was well trained and the scenery the same as that used in New York. Clever people and much hard work and pretty scenery save "Panjandrum" from being a failure, and make it, if not a great comic opera, an amusing entertainment. It appealed to the popular taste and was received with marked demonstrations of approval on the part of the audience. There are many people who enjoyed the raillery of "Panjandrum" who would not have greatly appreciated the comedy presented by Mr. Crane and his excellent company the Wednesday evening preceding. Crane and Robson and comedians of that ilk appeal to a narrower circle than does a broad and showy production such as De Wolf Hopper always appears in, and it is not at all surprising that "Brother John" should have had a smaller house than "Panjandrum." "Brother John" is brim full of fun, and there are many rather strong situations in it; but after one has followed Mr. Crane through the play and thoroughly enjoyed his cleverness and that of his company, which, by the way, has little scope in this piece, there comes the thought that "Brother John" is not the best that Mr. Crane can do, and one wishes that, with his artistic merit, he would stick to plays of a higher order than this one, which is crude in many places, and palpably overwrought in others. There is a demand for high comedy, comedy without any coarseness. Mr. Crane is competent for high comedy roles, and we believe he will in time aim a little higher. "Brother John" is not as good as "The Senator" in which Mr. Crane was last seen in this city, although there may be a larger measure of a certain kind of humor in it. Miss Gladys Wallis, who made such a delightful impression in the latter play two years ago, was appropriately placed in "Brother John," and this petite actress was full of grace and dainty effectiveness as *Maggie Rolan*. No company has visited Lincoln in a long time that has contained so many handsome and talented women as this organization. It is too bad that some of them did not have a better opportunity to display their ability. Miss Amy Busby has a most attractive stage presence, and her interpretation of the comparatively unimportant "business" that fell to her lot was so intelligently and gracefully done that one felt a wish to see this actress in a role commensurate with her merit. *Helen Van Sprague* (her part), together

with a number of other people who might be said to walk through the play, had very little to do with the story, and that the author used her and some of the rest as material to fill up the chinks, is evident from the summary manner in which they were dismissed at the end of the third act. *Helen* has a great deal of trouble with *Henry De Ryter*, a worthless fellow, and these two are allowed for a few fleeting moments to engross the attention of the audience. Then they are rushed back of the scenes, and the people in front are left in ignorance of their fate. Whether *Helen* marries *Henry* and reforms him, or whether she doesn't and he goes to the bad, or whether she does and they both go to the bad, we do not know. Better not to have brought them on at all than to treat them in this fashion. Miss Collier was a fine *Hettie*, *Brother John's* employe and by the way, there was a very improbable scene at the close where *Hettie* finally asked *John* to take her. A girl as modest as *Hettie* would have waited a lifetime before she would have proposed herself. Miss O'Neill as *Sophie* made the most of her part, and it was a pretty fair part.

In the meanest theatre, frequented by the commonest people, as well as in the gilded palaces of pleasure, the feelings of the audience are stirred when for the moment villainy triumphs over virtue. The hardened street arab in the gallery, the society belle in the box, and the blase man of the world who occupies a seat in the parquet, each feel the touch of sentiment. Eyes become dim, handkerchiefs flutter, and as outraged virtue is trod upon by the heel of vice, what an awful suspense there is! Finally when virtue triumphs, as it always does—on the stage—the audience applauds and smiles and laughs, and the people go home happy. Off the stage it is different. The daily newspapers record events infinitely sadder than any depicted on the stage, because they are real; but the reader is not disturbed. People read these dark pages in the history of life merely as amusement. There is no sympathy for the victim or sufferer, no generous desire to rescue the perishing, no stirring of the heart; at least there is seldom any sympathetic manifestation. At the theater there is no more touching scene than when a maiden seeks to defend her honor. The awful import of the struggle seems to be appreciated there, with the glow of the footlights and the slow music of the orchestra. But in real life a woman betrayed seldom excites any other feeling than that of curiosity. No expressions of sympathy are heard. People cry as they witness the sham battle between virtue and vice—right and wrong, on the stage. Off, the more terrible conflict that is always going on is generally unheeded. The wail of the vanquished brings only its own echo.

Thomas W. Keene is reported as saying: "It is my intention after next season to limit my tour to ten weeks, after the manner of Mr.

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